REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated June 8, 2004. Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20, 22, 24 and 70 to 78 are presented for examination, with Claims 25 to 69 having been withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1, 9 and 17, all of which are independent, have been amended. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that Claims 3, 8, 11, 16, 19 and 24 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claims. Applicants have chosen not to rewrite these claims at this time since the base claims for each of Claims 3, 8, 11, 16, 19 and 24 are believed to be allowable for at least the reasons set forth below.

In the Office Action, Claims 1, 4, 6, 9, 12, 14, 17, 20, 22, 70, 71, 73, 74, 76 and 77 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,758,259 (Lawler), and Claims 1, 4, 6, 9, 12, 14, 17, 20, 22, and 70 to 80 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over EP 774 866 A2 (Reynolds). Reconsideration and withdrawal are respectfully requested.

The present invention generally concerns enabling a selection of a program for viewing in a television system. Attributes associated with each program viewed by a user in the television system are recorded. The attributes comprise first attributes associated with characteristics of the programs and second attributes associated with the viewing of the programs, wherein the first attributes are made available as Electronic Program Guide (EPG) data. Sets of the attributes are formed, wherein each of the sets comprise at least two of the attributes. According to one feature of the invention, upon

entry of a user request for a program recommendation, a search is performed for programs with attributes that include all the attributes of at least one of the sets.

Referring specifically to the claims, independent Claim 1 as amended is directed to a method of enabling a selection of a program for viewing in a television system. The method includes the step of recording attributes associated with each program viewed by a user in the television system, the attributes comprising first attributes associated with characteristics of the programs and second attributes associated with the viewing of the programs, wherein the first attributes are made available as Electronic Program Guide (EPG) data. The method also includes the steps of forming sets of the attributes, wherein each of the sets comprise at least two of the attributes, and upon entry of a user request for a program recommendation, performing a search for programs with attributes that include all the attributes of at least one of the sets, and notifying the user of an availability of programs that include all the attributes of at least one of the sets as program recommendations.

Independent Claim 9 as amended is directed to a recommendation system for enabling a selection of a program for viewing in a television system. The recommendation system includes memory means for recording attributes associated with each program viewed by a user in the television system, the attributes comprising first attributes associated with characteristics of the programs and second attributes associated with the viewing of the programs, wherein the first attributes are made available as Electronic Program Guide (EPG) data. The recommendation system also includes processing means for forming sets of the attributes, wherein each of the sets comprise at least two of the attributes. In addition, the recommendation system includes searching

means for performing a search for programs with attributes that include all attributes of at least one of the sets, and on-screen display means for notifying the user of an availability of programs that include all the attributes of at least one of the sets as program recommendations upon entry of a user request for program recommendations.

Independent Claim 17 as amended is directed to a computer program product, having a computer readable medium, having a computer program recorded therein, for enabling a selection of a program for viewing in a television system. The computer program product includes computer program code for recording attributes associated with each program viewed by a user in the television system, the attributes comprising first attributes associated with characteristics of the programs and second attributes associated with the viewing of the programs, wherein the first attributes are made available as Electronic Program Guide (EPG) data. The computer program product also includes computer program code for forming sets of the attributes, wherein each of the sets comprise at least two of the attributes. In addition, the computer program product includes computer program code for, upon entry of a user request for a program recommendation, performing a search for programs with attributes that include all the attributes of at least one of the sets, and notifying the user of an availability of programs that include all the attributes of at least one of the sets as program recommendations.

The applied art is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of the invention of the subject application. In particular, Lawler and Reynolds are not seen to disclose or suggest at least the feature that, upon entry of a user request for a program recommendation, a search is performed for programs with attributes that include all the attributes of at least one of the sets.

As understood by Applicants, Lawler teaches a method of identifying for a selected viewer a preferred program available from an interactive television or televideo (IT) system at a selected time. See Lawler, Abstract. Table 2 of Lawler represents an exemplary viewer preferences table of selected characteristics of programming previously delivered to the viewer. A viewer preference database for the selected viewer correlates criteria such as "Name," "Genre," "Subgenre," and "Team" for programs the viewer has received with the values or predetermined characteristics of the programs and a count, for each value, of the number of received programs matching the value (e.g., Name, Tim Allen). See Lawler, column 7, line 62 to column 8, line 34.

The Office Action equated the values of Lawler (e.g. Name, Tim Allen) with the claimed first attributes associated with characteristics of the programs, and equated the count of Lawler with the claimed second attributes associated with the viewing of the programs. The Office Action further compared the arrangement of values and corresponding counts in Table 2 with the claimed forming of sets of the attributes, wherein each of the sets comprise at least two of said attributes. For example, the Office Action designated the following as sets within Lawler:

S1 = {Genre, Talk, 54}
S2 = {Sub-Genre, Comedy, 8}
S3 = {Name, David Letterman, 54}
S4 = {Name, Tim Allen, 27}
S5 = {Name, Roseanne Bar, 42}

As seen in Table 2 of Lawler and in each of the above sets, a count is included as an attribute for each set. However, Lawler is not seen to include this attribute when performing a search. Rather, the count in Lawler is seen to indicate a priority of the values, with the lowest count values being dropped when new values are added. See

Lawler, column 8, lines 40 to 42. Since Lawler does not include the count when performing a search, it does not perform a search including all the attributes within a set.

In addition to providing sets S1 to S5 as listed above, the Office, at page 4, provided for the following sets within Lawler, which do not include count:

S_{P1} = {talk, comedy, David Letterman, Tim Allen, Rosanne Barr}
S_{P2} = {news, Peter Jennings}

However, as noted above, the Office Action equated count with the claimed second attributes associated with the viewing of the programs. Since sets S_{P1} and S_{P2} do not include count, they are not seen to include such second attributes.

Accordingly, Lawler is not seen to disclose or suggest that upon entry of a user request for a program recommendation, a search is performed for programs with attributes that include all the attributes of at least one of the sets, with the attributes comprising first attributes associated with characteristics of the programs and second attributes associated with the viewing of the programs.

As understood by Applicants, Reynolds discloses an apparatus for searching specific television programs which satisfy certain criteria concerning a viewer's preferences, including topics and themes of the television programs. See Reynolds, Abstract. Figure 2 of Reynolds depicts a viewed item list, in which data is automatically stored whenever a program is watched for a given period of time. In addition to storing name (movie, comedy, drama) and type (topic, theme, title) information, the viewed item list also stores count and date information. See Reynolds, column 2, lines 35 to 52.

The Office Action alleged that Figure 2 teaches attributes comprising first attributes associated with characteristics of the programs and second attributes associated

with the viewing of the programs. The Office Action further contended that Figure 6C of Reynolds, which is a screen display for editing user information, teaches that the attributes are formed into sets comprising at least two of the attributes.

However, Reynolds is not seen to teach that its count or date information, which allegedly correspond with the claimed second attributes associated with the viewing of the programs, are included when performing a search. Rather, the count information of Reynolds is used to display a list of search results in a weighted fashion, after the search has already been performed. For example, the list may be displayed in descending order of the number of times that a particular type of show was watched. See Reynolds, column 3, lines 29 to 32. Accordingly, Reynolds is not seen to disclose or suggest that upon entry of a user request for a program recommendation, a search is performed for programs with attributes that include all the attributes of at least one of the sets, with the attributes comprising first attributes associated with characteristics of the programs and second attributes associated with the viewing of the programs.

Accordingly, based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, independent Claims 1, 9 and 17 as amended are believed to be allowable over the applied references.

The other claims in the application are each dependent from the independent claims and are believed to be allowable over the applied references for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

No other matters being raised, it is believed that the entire application is fully in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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